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OFFICE OF PETITIONS

In re Application
Darwin Rambo et al.
Application No. 10/620,474
Filed: July 16, 2003
Attorney Docket No. 15019US01

DECISION ON APPLICATION
FOR PATENT TERM ADJUSTMENT

This is a decision on the APPLICATION FOR RECONSIDERATION OF THE DETERMINATION OF PATENT TERM ADJUSTMENT UNDER 35 U.S.C. 154(b) ACCOMPANYING THE NOTICE OF ALLOWANCE (37 CFR § 1.705) filed on October 22, 2010.

As the instant application for patent term adjustment requests reconsideration of the patent term adjustment as it relates to the Office's failure to issue the patent within three years of the filing date, the application for patent term adjustment under 37 CFR 1.705(b) is **DISMISSED as PREMATURE**.

Knowledge of the actual date the patent issues is required to calculate the amount, if any, of additional patent term patentees are entitled to for Office failure to issue the patent within three years. See 37 CFR 1.702(b). (This is true even where a request for continued examination (RCE) was filed). The computer will not undertake the § 1.702(b) calculation until the actual date of issuance of the patent has been determined. Likewise, the computer will not calculate any further Office delay under 37 CFR 1.702(a)(4) or applicant delay under 37 CFR 1.704(c)(10) until the actual date of issuance of the patent has been determined. As such, the Office cannot make a determination on the patent term adjustment relating to those provisions until the patent has issued.

Requesting reconsideration of the patent term adjustment to be indicated on the patent under 37 CFR 1.705(b) based on the initial determination of patent term adjustment and a projected issuance date of the patent (or even the filing date of the request for continued examination) is premature. Accordingly, it is appropriate to dismiss such a request as premature.

Rather than file an application for patent term adjustment under 37 CFR 1.705(b) contesting the 37 CFR 1.702(b) calculation at the time of the mailing of the notice of allowance, applicants are advised that they may wait until the time of the issuance of the patent and file a request for reconsideration of the patent term adjustment pursuant to 37 CFR 1.705(d). As the USPTO does not calculate the amount of time earned pursuant to 37 CFR 1.702(b) until the time of the issuance of the patent, the Office will consider any request for reconsideration of the patent term adjustment due to an error in the calculation of 37 CFR 1.702(b) to be timely if the request for reconsideration is filed within two months of the issuance of the patent. However, as to all other bases for contesting the initial determination of patent term adjustment received with the notice of allowance, applicants must timely file an application for patent term adjustment prior to the payment of the issue fee.¹

To the extent that applicant otherwise requests reconsideration of the patent term adjustment at the time of the mailing of the notice of allowance, the application for patent term adjustment is DISMISSED.

Applicants contest the application(s) of 37 CFR § 1.704(b) to reduce the patent term adjustment by two (2) days in that the Office action response was filed on the first business day after a deadline falling on a weekend or holiday and thus was not late.

Applicant's arguments have been considered, but not found to be persuasive.

Rule 1.704(b) sets forth, in pertinent part:

an applicant shall be deemed to have failed to engage in reasonable efforts to conclude processing or examination of an application for the cumulative total of any periods of time in excess of three months that are taken to reply to any notice or action by the Office making any rejection, objection, argument, or other request, measuring such three-month period from the date the notice or action was mailed or given to the applicant, in which case the period of adjustment set forth in § 1.703 shall be reduced by the number of days, if any, beginning on the day after the date that is three months after the date of mailing or transmission of the Office communication notifying the applicant of the rejection, objection, argument, or other request and ending on the date the reply was filed. The period, or shortened statutory period, for reply that is set in the Office action or notice has no effect on the three-month period set forth in this paragraph.

¹ For example, if applicants dispute both the calculation of patent term adjustment under 37 CFR 1.702(a)(1) for Office failure to mail a first Office action or notice of allowance not later than fourteen months after the date on which the application was filed, and under 37 CFR 1.702(b) for Office failure to issue a patent within three years of the actual filing date of the application, then applicants must still timely file an application for patent term adjustment prior to the payment of the issue fee to contest the calculation of Office delay in issuing a first Office action or notice of allowance. See 37 CFR 1.705(b) and 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(3)(B). A dispute as to the calculation of the § 1.702(a)(1) period raised on request for reconsideration of patent term adjustment under 37 CFR 1.705(d) will be dismissed as untimely filed.

A Final Office Action was mailed November 20, 2009 and the response was therefore due on February 20, 2010. February 20, 2010 was a weekend and thus, the response was received on February 22, 2010 which is three months and two days later. As such, a reduction of two days was assessed. Patentees have argued that this is improper, as February 20, 2010 fell on a weekend. However, Petitioner will note that 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(2)(C)(ii)² does not require that a reply be filed in the Office within its three (3) month grace period, but simply specifies that there is a patent term adjustment reduction if a reply is not filed within this three (3) month period. Therefore, the "carry-over" provisions of 35 U.S.C. § 21(b)³ does not apply to the three (3) month period in 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(2)(C)(ii).

In view thereof, the patent term adjustment was properly stated at the time the Notice of Allowance was mailed.

Any request for reconsideration of the patent term adjustment indicated on the patent must be timely filed within two months after issuance pursuant to 37 CFR 1.705(d) and must include payment of the required fee under 37 CFR 1.18(e).

The Office acknowledges the submission of the required fee of \$200.00 set forth in 37 CFR 1.18(e).

The Office of Data Management has been advised of this decision. This application is being referred to the Office of Data Management for issuance of the patent.

Telephone inquiries specific to this decision should be directed to the undersigned at (571) 272-3212.



Patricia Faison-Ball
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Office of Petitions

² "With respect to adjustments to patent term made under the authority of paragraph (1)(B), an applicant shall be deemed to have failed to engage in reasonable efforts to conclude processing or examination of an application for the cumulative total of any periods of time in excess of 3 months that are taken to respond to a notice from the Office making any rejection, objection, argument, or other request, measuring such 3-month period from the date the notice was given or mailed to the applicant."

³ "When the day, or the last day, for taking any action or paying any fee in the United States Patent and Trademark Office falls on Saturday, Sunday, or a Federal holiday within the District of Columbia, the action may be taken, or fee paid, on the next succeeding secular or business day."